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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 003733

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ DISCUSSES
CONTINGENCY PLANNING, OTHER SUBJECTS WITH DCM

REF: BAGHDAD 3693

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Daniel Speckhard for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Australian Ambassador to Iraq Marc Innes-Brown asked the DCM if the U.S. would be able to help transport Australian nationals from the International Zone (IZ) to Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) in the event of a "worst-case scenario" emergency. He also informed the DCM of security concerns related to the scheduled transfer of the Combat Support Hospital (CASH) complex, one building of which backs directly onto the Australian Embassy, from MNF to Iraqi control in 2007. The Ambassador also asked about issues related to militias and the four-point agreement between Iraqi political leaders signed October 2 (reftel). END SUMMARY.

Planning for Emergencies and Security

12. (C) Innes-Brown told the DCM during an October 4 meeting that his Embassy was updating its emergency plan and realized that it did not have the necessary assets to transfer Australian nationals from the IZ to BIAP should the "worst case scenario" come to pass. The Ambassador estimated that there were "a few hundred" Australian nationals in the IZ, many of them working for security firms. Innes-Brown stated that he believed there was a macro-level agreement between the Australian and U.S. government that committed each government to make "best endeavors" to help the other in the case of need, but that he was interested in pursuing a more specific arrangement. The DCM said that he would look into Innes-Brown's request.

13. (C) Innes-Brown also relayed another security concern, this one related to the scheduled transfer of the CASH complex to Iraqi control in 2007. The Ambassador said that one of the buildings in the complex, a four-story dormitory-type structure known as Carl Hall, backed right up to the fenceline of the Australian Embassy. The Ambassador said that, according to Australian security experts, the security of the Embassy would be "untenable" if the Iraqi government controlled the building. The Australians understood, the Ambassador continued, that the Prime Minister was the key decision-maker on property issues in the IZ and were planning to write him a letter noting their concerns and offering to buy or lease the building. The DCM thanked the Ambassador for informing him about this issue and noted that there was a group within the Iraqi government charged with planning for the security of diplomatic facilities.

Militias and the October 2 Agreement

¶4. (C) The Ambassador also asked the DCM for an assessment of the Iraqi government's current approach to dealing with militias. The DCM replied that the Prime Minister seemed committed to dissolving militias by the end of the year, preferably through a political process. Recounting a recent incident in Muthanna province where a Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) group fired on an Australian military convoy from a school, Innes-Brown noted that some of his Iraqi contacts believed that negotiations with JAM would be fruitless and force would be necessary. Innes-Brown also asked for an assessment of the importance of the four-point agreement announced October 12. The DCM replied that Ambassador Khalilzad thought that the agreement was a very positive step, not so much because of the mechanisms laid out in it but because it was an Iraqi initiative that involved key players and would increase the moral and political isolation of those involved in terrorism and sectarian killings.

KHALILZAD